

Facts For the People.

BY S. H. BASHOR.

In an August number of the EVANGELIST appeared an article over my signature entitled "Notes of Warning" written with a view to the correction of certain inaccuracy in the general published matter of the paper. Having returned from my holiday in the mountains, and read with some care the criticism of, and reference to the essay, made by the editor and others, in the various issues of the Journal since, it is now my purpose to call attention to a few facts that have either been forgotten or overlooked. In doing this I shall steadily keep in view the prosperity and peace of the church. I have no disposition to engage in strife or fault-finding as a pleasurable pastime. Though not advanced in years my variable Christian experience has not increased my love for a strife of words over imaginary differences or shallow theories. While I cannot boast of my former love for disputation, my affection for the church of my adoption is such as to forbid silence when its best interests are at stake, or its prosperity and credit in any way endangered.

It was expected that "Notes of Warning" would not meet the approval of all; but an unanticipated advantage of its purpose and tenor has characterized its opposers.

The article was written upon the premise that the EVANGELIST is the authorized and accepted organ of the church. This premise was assumed upon the action of the National Conventions held at Dayton, Ohio, June 1882, and again at Ashland in Sept. 1887. As such it was expected by the mass of the church to stand as the exponent of the distinctive doctrines of the brotherhood. What these doctrines are was clearly understood at the beginning. In the first convention ever held by our people it was distinctively stated that we were not then nor ever had been at variance with the German Baptist church upon questions of doctrine, faith, repentance and baptism, feet-washing, the Lord's Supper, non-resistance, non-conformity to the world, the salutation of the holy kiss, the cup and loaf, anointing the sick with oil, and the doctrine of future punishment and rewards, were never in dispute among us as one of the elements of division. Some contention existed as to the single or double mode of feet-washing, and as to the best method of securing the "non-conformity to the world in dress of the membership," but as to their being Gospel elements, Gospel doctrines, and Gospel ordinances, there was not the shadow of dispute. Nothing of the kind ever entered into our disputations, as an element of division. This every man, woman or child among us, knows, who passed through the hot days of church conflict and had the intelligence to comprehend the nature of the strife.

When we met at Ashland a few days after the Arnold's Grove conference had completed its work there was but one assent to the doctrines of the church upon the question of ordinances and principles, and but one in the channel of opposition to the traditions, mere customs, and mandatory enactments of the Annual Meeting. Now what did we divide about.

1st. The authority of Annual Meeting to enact laws and frame conditions of membership in the absence of Gospel precept or example.

2nd. Its authority, or the authority of a given church, or committee of Elders to expel a member from church privileges without fair, full and open trial.

3rd. The wisdom, or authority, to make the style or shape of the clothing a test of official standing or membership.

4th. The usurpation of authority by the eldership, and the general antagonism of its councils to the spirit of progress and liberty inspired by the word of God.

We deplored the expulsion of sisters from the church and their suspension from communion privileges for not wearing the cap or bonnet. These with a few similar questions were the instruments of division. It was upon charges involving these questions that the Arnold's Grove conference expelled H. R. Holsinger and suspended

S. H. Bashor from the ministry of its church. Upon similar charges Brown, Yoder, Bauman, Beer, Worst and others were expelled. No question of doctrine, from the design and mode of baptism to the anointing of the sick with oil, imposed its shadow in the strife. Progressive principles defined, a document which embraced in its limits a clear enumeration of all the ordinances and doctrines of the church, formed the platform of the Progressive party and the basis on which the Progressive Christian was published to the end of its existence. Soon after the Arnold's Grove conference had completed its work, a convention was called to meet at Ashland. On meeting the brethren, in committee, freely discussed the nature of the re-organization of the church, formed the declaration of principles in which was set forth our grievances and the purposes of our future. In this not only no dissent from the church ordinances was expressed but a firm avowal to return from the abuses and traditions of the Annual Meeting hierarchy to the original Gospel simplicity of the church. At Dayton the following year the same was freely re-affirmed in different ways. When a committee sought to thrust on the convention a systematized creed embracing a conglomerated mass of ordinances and usages, I opposed it upon the ground that it was neither necessary nor expedient. I had the implicit confidence in the intelligence, the integrity, the sincerity, and the stability of my co-laborers to believe they fully understood the nature of claims and were able to defend them without setting the precedent of passing upon the validity and power of what the Gospel so clearly taught. I did not approve it because I had some hidden doctrine to thrust upon the church in future years, nor because I did not believe the doctrines the resolutions embraced, but because I knew they were taught in the Gospel and had sufficient authority for all practical purposes, without the sanction and seal of our little convention.

After the Dayton convention our clergy began the work of preaching, baptizing and organizing churches. They without a single exception preached the same doctrine, established the same ordinances and placed upon the same Gospel basis all churches drawn together. Do you know what they preached? If not listen. After the doctrine of the trinity, the authenticity of the Bible and the general principles of evangelical Christianity they preached as elements of Christian science, faith and repentance as prerequisite to baptism. Preached trine immersion as the true and only primitive Gospel baptism, preached feet washing as a Christian ordinance to be observed in the assembly of the church, a full evening meal as the Lord's Supper, in connection with which should be taken the loaf and cup of communion. They also preached the necessity of observing the salutation of the holy kiss, the doctrine of non-resistance and non-conformity to the world, the anointing of the sick with oil and of the immortality of the soul. Upon these distinctive doctrines every Brethren church was established that was organized. There was unity of faith and unity of action all along the line. The EVANGELIST was tendered by its proprietors, and accepted by the convention, as the authorized and recognized organ of the church. This is why Bro. Holsinger began, from that time forward to cease publishing it as an absolutely "free rostrum." He recognized the fact that the day it became the organ of the brotherhood it had but one distinctive mission; a mission maintaining and defending the doctrine, the claims and the distinctive principles of the brotherhood. Its columns were no longer the free property of every shade and cast of mind but the servants of the church. The editor recognized that he no longer had discretionary power to publish except in the channel of our emphatic church claims. Loyal to the brotherhood, loyal to the full surrender of his Journal to the church, and loyal to the fact that it was now clothed with all the authority the convention and church could control for the one absolute function of throwing up, and making strong our defences, about us. Our older and more experienced brethren such as Brown, Beer, Yoder, Swihart, Worst, Wampler, Sterling, Hixon,

Fitzgerald, Spanogle, Bauman and others also aware of this fact began the work of recognizing and establishing churches based upon and governed by these doctrines and elements. There were questions upon which there was no insistence then and upon which there is none now. Reference will be made to these by and by. For the present the statement alone will be emphasized that the church is now, and has been from the beginning established in a well defined and immovable doctrinal policy. These doctrines have been measurably outlined above, and will be fully and carefully analyzed further along. The claim that has been made by our opposers of the other branches of the church and others that we have no settled doctrine and no unswerving system of ordinances is both misleading and false. The only difficulty with which we have had to contend was the failure of management of the EVANGELIST, at times, to keep clearly before the public the difference between the defence and maintenance of our church claims, and the frequent expression and advocacy of unsupported individual opinion. Its columns have not always been free from the outline of theories and doctrines at variance with our settled code, nor from an insinuating shadowy, and vague opposition to what it actually embraces. On the other hand there has been much matter published on the right line, but the two classes have been so mixed and mingled that the uninitiated public has been misled in many instances. Thousands of our membership became such from no other motive than to enjoy the fellowship of Gospel service in these distinctive doctrines and ordinances. Any diviation from the past without good and sufficient reasons and general consent, either in teaching or practice would result only in dissatisfaction and division.

(To be continued next week.)

The Passover And the Supper.

I see in a late Evangelist, Brother Mason sticks to the old theory, that the meal on the night of the betrayal, was in no sense the Jewish Passover, and not only so, but he seems to court a friendly interchange of views, and I think he should be accommodated, not that we love controversy, but because we love the truth, and shall always be ready to exchange an error for a truth, hoping others will do the same. We can truly sympathize with our much esteemed brother for we too, labored under the same mistake for a period of thirty years, in fact had the utmost confidence in the invulnerability of the position, that Christ and the Apostles did not eat the passover on the night of the betrayal. The first eye opening we got, was from the greatest and ablest man, that the Dunkard church was ever blessed with, none other than the lamented James Quinter, whom we regarded as standard authority, on all such questions. In conversation with this man some fifteen years ago, the position brother Mason holds, and the one generally held, and zealously defended by the church was the subject of conversation, and to my surprise, elder Quinter frankly admitted, that the position was never clear to his mind, that the question was one that he did not fully understand on account of the ever present fact, that the first two Evangelists speak exclusively of the meal as the passover.

These may not be the Elder's precise words, but it is a fair and impartial account of the import of them. I then and there began to doubt whether I had reached a correct understanding of the question myself, and now after years of careful investigation, I am thoroughly convinced that the position we then held as a church, and the same that brother Mason still clings to, is absolutely and utterly untenable. Brother Mason is in the same mist that we all were in. He ignores the clear and positive statements of Matthew and Mark, as well as the greater part of Luke, and depends altogether on the allusive statements of St John. Why, brother Mason calls Matthew, Mark, and Luke "Synoptists," I am unable to understand, when the fact is they give a straight-forward account of the facts as they transpired, and if there is any Synopticism in the case; to my mind it is in John's account and not any of the others.